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# Poll in Europe Finds Few Support A U.S. Military Reply to Terrorism

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LONDON, March 8 — People in France, Britain and West Germany say they believe American military action against international terrorism would only make the problem worse, even though they are dissatisfied with their own Governments' handling of the problem, a New York Times Poll shows.

The survey found some support for joining American economic sanctions against Libya, something that the Governments of all three countries have declined to do.

French respondents favored joining in the sanctions, 42 percent to 29 percent; West Germans were evenly divided, at 33 percent, and the British opposed the sanctions by a margin of 41 percent to 38 percent, a gap equal to the margin of sampling error of the British survey. In the West German survey, the margin of sampling error was also three points; in France it was four points.

In addition, less than half the respondents in the three countries said the United States was "overexcited" about terrorism. And most agreed, as President Reagan has argued, that Libya and the Palestine Liberation Organization had been involved in terrorist attacks.

The poll also found that no more than a fifth of those surveyed in any of the three nations said pressure on Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians would help to solve the problem.

## Domestic Terrorist Threat

The survey was conducted last month by The Times to measure Western Europeans' opinions on an issue that has irritated relations between their Governments and Washington.

No survey was conducted in Italy, the site of many recent terrorist incidents, including an attack on Dec. 27 at a Rome airport, because it was not possible to get survey results in a timely fashion. In the countries polled, all interviewing was concluded before the

assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden on Feb. 28.

One of the most striking findings of the poll, coordinated for The Times by Market and Opinion Research International of London, was the extent to which purely domestic terrorism was considered a greater problem than terrorist acts linked to the Middle East. This finding was clearly connected to other opinions; in particular, people who said domestic terrorism was the greater problem tended to be less sympathetic to United States initiatives.

In Britain, which faces intermittent violence stemming from the conflict in Northern Ireland, an overwhelming majority of the 1,951 people interviewed — 59 percent to 25 percent — considered domestic terrorism the greater danger. Northern Ireland itself was not included in the British survey.

In West Germany, domestic terrorism, most recently linked to the Red Army Faction, was seen as a greater threat than foreign terrorist groups by 41 percent to 35 percent among the 2,007 people interviewed.

Only in France was terrorism from abroad seen as the more serious problem, by a plurality of 43 percent to 33 percent of the sample of 994 adults. France has had terrorist attacks by extreme leftist groups and Basque and Corsican separatists, as well as by Middle Eastern and Armenian groups.

In all, 25 percent in West Germany, 29 percent in France and 41 percent in Britain said their Governments were doing all they could to fight terrorism. In a New York Times/CBS News Poll in January, 38 percent of Americans surveyed said their Government was doing all it could.

## The Palestinian Question

The European survey found a sense of resignation that as long as Israel did not make concessions to the Palestinians, terrorism would continue. Substantial majorities took this position, though only about a third of the respondents said they held the view strongly.

But on the key question of whether pressure on Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians would reduce terrorism, only 20 percent of the French, 16 percent of the British and 15 percent of the West Germans said it would.

In all three countries, blame for terrorism fell heavily on Libya and the P.L.O., with roughly three respondents in five listing them as a source of terrorism. In France, Iran was also mentioned that frequently, and two-fifths of the French also listed Syria.

The only other sources of terrorism to receive nearly as much mention were domestic groups, such as the Irish Republican Army, cited by 59 per-

cent of the British; the Red Army Faction, cited by 53 percent of the West Germans, and Direct Action, named by 50 percent of the French.

Israel was cited as a source of terrorism by a third of the British and French and a fifth of the West Germans.

## U.S. and Soviet Held to Blame

A striking difference among the three countries was the extent to which they blamed the United States and the Soviet Union for terrorism.

The British were about as likely to blame one superpower as the other. Eighteen percent of the British blamed the Soviet Union or its intelligence services for terrorism, while 16 percent who blamed the United States or the Central Intelligence Agency.

The French were far more likely to blame Soviet than American authorities, by 31 percent to 18 percent. And only 7 percent of the West Germans blamed the United States for terrorism, while 20 percent who named the Soviet Union.

Almost every measure in the survey suggested that the United States would find little support in Europe if it made military action a regular response to terrorism.

The respondents were asked: "If the United States took military action against those responsible every time a terrorist attack affected Americans, do you think this would reduce international terrorism, or would it only make things worse?"

Opposition was strongest in Britain, where only 17 percent said American military action would reduce terrorism, while 64 percent said it would make things worse. In West Germany, 22 percent said they supported American military action and 45 percent said they did not.

In France, 27 percent said they thought American military action would help fight terrorism; 44 percent said it would not.

## A Choice of 5 Actions

Another question underlined the deep differences between Western Europeans and Americans on the issue of military action. Respondents were given a list of five possible actions against terrorism, including two military options — one against the terrorists themselves, the other against countries that supported terrorism.

In the Times/CBS News Poll in January, 56 percent of Americans favored military action against either or both of those targets. But in Britain, only 36 percent favored such action, as did 31 percent in France and 27 percent in West Germany.

In all three countries, younger respondents were more likely than their elders to favor military action. A similar pattern is suggested by fragmentary data from Italy, including a survey conducted for magazine L'Europeo in October after the commandeering of the cruise ship Achille Lauro. Surveys also showed that Italians, like the Western Europeans polled by The Times, were skeptical of American military action.

Continued

One of the intriguing aspects of the Times survey is that while the British were slightly more inclined than the French or West Germans to favor military action against terrorism in general, they were the most strongly opposed to American action.

An explanation for that attitude was offered by Robert M. Worcester, chairman of Market and Opinion Research International, who is widely regarded as Britain's leading authority on polling. "It's part of the current wave of anti-Americanism in Britain," Mr. Worcester said, citing discord in Britain over the siting of American cruise missiles and concerns about American policy toward Europe in general.

"There are also the proposed takeovers of several strategically important British companies by American multinationals," he said.

The interviews in Britain were done Feb. 8 to 12, amid a controversy over the takeover of a British helicopter company by an American-led consortium. (The French interviews were conducted from Feb. 7 to 21, and the West German interviews from Feb. 1 to 10.)

Indeed, Britain was the only country where a substantial minority — 41 percent — agreed with the statement that "the United States is getting overexcited about international terrorism." Forty-two percent disagreed.

In West Germany, 19 percent agreed with the statement and 47 percent disagreed. In France, 21 percent agreed and 52 percent disagreed.

The French were notable both for

their tendency to blame Moslem countries for terrorism and their relative sympathy for the United States.

A partial explanation is France's hostility to Libya, with which it has been involved in a long military confrontation in Chad. In addition, France has been swept in recent years by a wave of anti-Soviet feeling and by generally favorable attitudes toward President Reagan.

#### Terrorism and Foreign Travel

Another difference in European and American views was seen when respondents were asked if terrorism would lead them to urge a friend to call off a foreign trip this year.

In the United States, 57 percent said in the Times/CBS News Poll in January that they would urge a friend to stay home because of fear of terrorism.

In Europe, where foreign travel often involves trips of only a few hundred miles, 14 percent of the West Germans, 9 percent of the British and 8 percent of the French said they would urge a friend not to travel abroad.

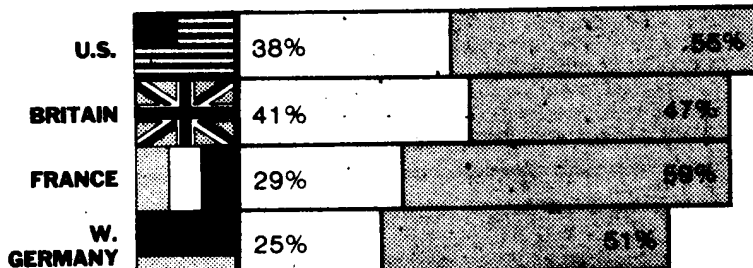
Still, the Europeans were not without qualms. In West Germany and France, just over half the respondents said their advice would depend on where the traveler was going. Among the British, one-quarter said the destination would affect their advice.

### The New York Times POLL

#### Taking Action Against Terrorism

Government is doing all it can to protect citizens against international terrorism

Government should be doing more



Poll in U.S. is based on 1,581 telephone interviews conducted by The New York Times/CBS News Poll Jan. 19-23. European survey is based on face-to-face interviews with 1,951 adults in Britain Feb. 8-12, 1994 in France Feb. 7-21 and 2,007 in West Germany Feb. 1-10. European interviews were coordinated by Market and Opinion Research International.

### The New York Times POLL

#### European Views On Terrorism



Britain

France

West Germany

#### Steps that would curb international terrorism

Military action against terrorists	28%	22%	22%
Much stricter airport security	63	69	66
Military action against governments that support terrorists	15	16	12
Economic sanctions against governments that support terrorists	34	48	39
Pressure on Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians	16	20	16
Government can do nothing	9	7	8
Don't know/no answer	9	9	17

#### U.S. military action against terrorists every time an attack affected Americans . . .

... would reduce international terrorism

... would make things worse

U.S. is getting overexcited about terrorism

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